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So You Have to Write a Strategic Plan: Why Not Make It Interesting?

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So You Have to Write a Strategic Plan: Why Not Make It Interesting?

Anne Marie Casey

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Your Experiences

- Good
 - You had input
 - The Library realized the majority of the goals
 - It was a fun process
- Not so Good
 - Nobody asked your opinion
 - The plan was shelved as soon as the ink dried
 - The process was painful
- Neutral



Strategic Planning 101

- Vision – Where we aspire to be a few years down the road
- Mission – What we do/Why we exist
- Values – What we stand for
- Priorities – What is most important to us
- Goals/Strategies – Big picture steps that will get us to the vision
- Objectives/Activities – Specific tasks, procedures, etc. related to goals
- Measures – What tells us we are successful
- Responsibility – Who owns it
- Timeline – When do we plan to accomplish it
- Annual Report – How much we actually accomplished



Common Strategic Planning Processes



- ▶ Library develops an environmental scan
 - ▶ Literature Review (Horizon Report, ACRL Trends, etc.)
 - ▶ Conducts surveys
- ▶ The plan is drafted (tends to be top-down) by:
 - ▶ Senior management
 - ▶ All management
 - ▶ Representative Committee
 - ▶ Librarians



Potential Outcomes

- Advantages
 - Process is faster
 - Consensus may be easier
 - High-level issues covered
- Disadvantages
 - Less opportunity for organization-wide input
 - Lack of buy-in or shared vision at all levels



Importance of Buy-in

- General Dunwoody's comment
 - "Engaged in visioning"
- Everyone contributes to the plan
 - GWU Libraries
- Everyone owns a piece of the plan
- Everyone is invested in achieving the goals
- More likely to have a positive outcome
- Without it – there can be resistance to the entire plan
 - Dissertation example



Buy-in the Hunt Library Way

- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Hunt Library
 - Supports Residential campus (ca. 5800) in Daytona Beach
 - Also supports ca. 23,000 distance learners all over the world
- Organizational Structure
 - Director
 - Four associate directors
 - 15 librarians
 - Two non-MLS professionals
 - 12 library technicians



Strategic Planning 2010: Grassroots

- Management Team (director and associate directors)
 - Drafted a vision statement related to the university vision
 - Reworked the mission statement to reflect current organization
 - Adapted values statements from ALA examples
 - Planned a mandatory all-staff retreat
- Retreat activities
 - Pink card/white card exercise
 - Readings and discussion
 - Adopting vision/mission/values



Digitizing the Media Instruction Books (or how the 2010-11 strategic plan developed)

- Pink card/white card ideas categorized into broad concepts
- Concepts from retreat discussion added
- Goals drafted from broad concept areas
- Activities/objectives developed from ideas brought by all staff
- Responsibility/metrics/timeline added for each activity
- But who owns the ideas that do not fit departments?
 - Push-back from department leads
 - Cross-departmental teams
- Results?



Steering around Bumps in the Road

- Resources
 - Successfully advocated for discovery-tool funding
 - Did not receive new ILS funding
- Campus space constraints
 - Losing the third floor
 - Massive weeding project
- Losing staff positions to attrition
- Extending the one-year plan to two
 - Added in activities from retreat not in first year plan



Planning for three years – phase one: SOAR

- Has anyone heard of SWOT
 - What does it stand for?
 - **Strengths**, Weaknesses, **Opportunities**, Threats
- Have you heard of its relative, SOAR
 - Can name the components?
 - **Strengths**, **Opportunities**, Aspirations, Results
- Appreciative inquiry + strategic planning = SOAR
- Appreciative inquiry involves “the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential” (appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm)



SOAR Retreat, 2012

- Director met with each department to explain SOAR
- Departments developed a worksheet with their ideas for each category
- At retreat, management team compiled departmental lists
- In open discussion, lists were finalized
 - Great deal of similarity
 - Provided early discussion of new broad categories for three-year plan
- Good start to an environmental scan ...
 - Still had work to do



Scenario Planning – the Next step

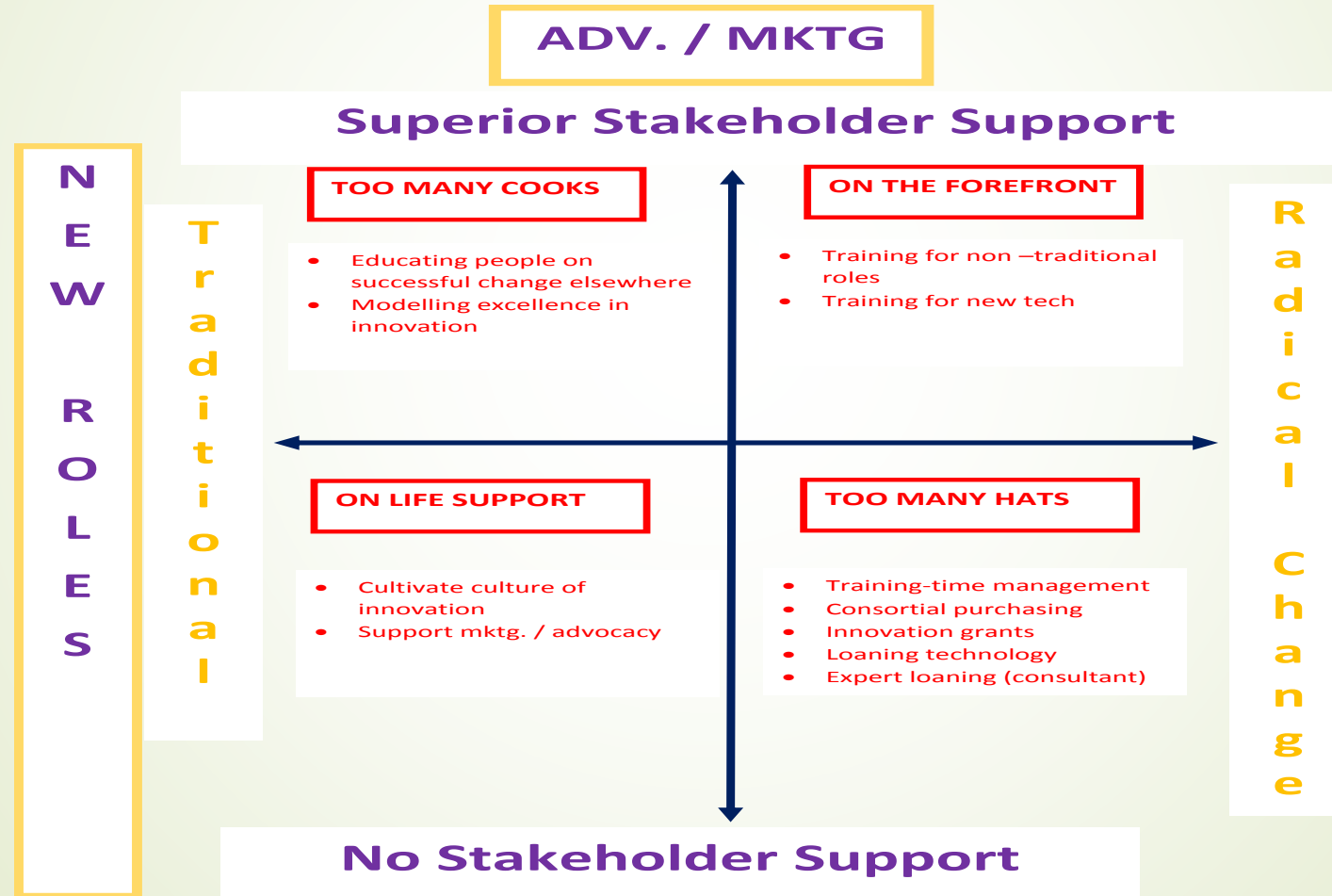
- Scenario planning is a way to envision the future
- Scenario planning steps
 - Determine the key forces in your library's environment
 - For example: Funding, New building, Staff attrition
 - Develop a quadrant displaying most important and most uncertain forces
 - Identify aspects of each area of the quadrant
 - Write scenarios (stories) to illustrate the aspects
 - Ask stakeholders to discuss and select the most appealing scenario
 - Develop plan from results of their discussions
- Hunt Library had some missteps, so the next chapter features NEFLIN



NEFLIN 2016-2018 Strategic Plan

- Board developed quadrants
- Board wrote very brief scenarios (stories) that reflected each quadrant
- Regional focus groups
 - Hired a consultant to facilitate groups
 - Held four around the region in early 2015
 - Participants placed into four groups
 - Read and discussed one scenario
 - Reported back to entire group
 - Entire group voted for top scenario
 - Consultant captured discussion point and prepared cumulative report

Quadrants – NEFLIN 2016-2018 Plan





Developing the Final NEFLIN Plan

- Board members read the report
- Developed goals from member feedback at focus groups
- Crafted objectives from feedback
- Added a small number of organization-specific objectives
- Board member feedback
 - Was very positive
 - We enjoyed the process as much as the final product



This is all very interesting, but how do I incorporate some of these ideas?

- You are not a library director
 - Talk to your director – suggest new ways of planning
 - If you are a manager, try some ideas out on your department
- Wish I had started taking notes at the beginning!
 - A brief list of references is on the next slide
 - This presentation will be posted to commons.erau.edu by next week
 - Contact me (or other planning geeks for ideas/guidance)
- Take a chance – it just might work
 - And if it doesn't, maybe you can get a publication/presentation out of it!



Brief Reference List

- Inclusive Planning

- Hill, S. E. K., Thomas, E. G., & Keller, L. F. (2009). A collaborative, ongoing university strategic planning framework: Process, landmines, and lessons. *Planning for Higher Education*, 37(4), 16-26.

- Appreciative Inquiry

- If you Google appreciative inquiry and strategic planning, you will find several good presentations and publications. My favorite is a presentation located at <http://www.cpsen.ca/images/2012/presentations/2a.pdf>. (Slide 9 has the worksheet Hunt Library adapted for our retreat.

- Scenario Planning

- Giesecke, J., Cawthorne, J., & Pearson, D. (2015). *Navigating the Future with Scenario Planning: A Guidebook for Librarians*. ACRL, 2015.

- Hunt Library strategic plans

- <http://huntlibrary.erau.edu/about/strategic-planning/index.html>

Questions





Thank You!

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